

Message Text

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SUBJ: HUNGARIAN MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S
CABINET CHANGES.

1. NOVEMBER 5 EDITIONS OF MAJOR BUDAPEST NEWSPAPERS DEVOTED SEVERAL COLUMNS TO A RUN-DOWN OF PRESIDENT FORD'S CABINET CHANGES. QUOTING KEY PASSAGES FROM PRESIDENT'S MONDAY NIGHT PRESS CONFERENCE AND FROM WESTERN MEDIA SOURCES, HUNGARIAN COMMENTATORS SPECULATED CAUTIOUSLY ON REASONS FOR THE CHANGE AND ATTEMPTED TO EVALUATE CABINET CHANGES IN CONTEXT OF PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPACT ON DETENTE AND SALT TALKS.

2. MOST COMMENTATORS SAW AN ELEMENT OF PRE-ELECTION POLITICS IN THE CABINET CHANGES. ACCORDING TO RICHARD HIRSCHLER OF VILAGGAZDASAG, BY PUTTING A DEFINITE "FORD" STAMP ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY THE PRESIDENT IS REFUTING HIS CRITICS' CHARGES OF INDECISIVENESS. IN THE WORDS
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OF TAMAS ZALA OF MAGYAR NEMZET, "THE PRESIDENT

WANTS TO GIVE A COLLECTIVE APPEARANCE TO HIS FOREIGN POLICY AND AT THE SAME TIME MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THE MOST IMPORTANT VOICE IS THE PRESIDENT'S."

3. HUNGARIAN OBSERVERS NOTED REPORTS OF PAST CLASHES OF OPINION BETWEEN MR. SCHLESINGER AND MR. KISSINGER. WHILE SPECULATING THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS COME OUT AHEAD OF HIS RIVAL, THEY ADD THAT HIS POWER HAS BEEN PLACED WITHIN LIMITS SINCE THE RELINQUISHING OF "HIS MOST IMPORTANT HAT" WILL PUT AN END TO HIS DAILY ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT. JUDIT KOVES OF NEPSZAVA OBSERVES THAT IDEOLOGICALLY MR. RUMSFELD IS CLOSE TO HIS PREDECESSOR MR. SCHLESINGER, BUT AS A "FORD" MAN IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT HE WILL WORK BETTER WITH THE TEAM.

4. HUNGARIAN COMMENTATORS SUGGESTED THAT, GIVEN THE FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY'S "AGGRESSIVE" STANCE ON SUCH QUESTIONS AS SALT AND THE DEFENSE BUDGET HIS RESIGNATION IS ULTIMATELY A PLUS FOR DETENTE FORCES AND MAY GIVE RESUMED MOMENTUM TO SALT TALKS.

5. COMMENT. IN THEIR ANALYSES OF THE CABINET CHANGES HUNGARIAN JOURNALISTS MADE A GREATER EFFORT THAN USUAL TO UNTANGLE THE GORDIAN KNOT OF AMERICAN POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY. THE CAUTIOUS, RELATIVELY OBJECTIVE TENOR OF THEIR REMARKS SEEMED TO REFLECT A GENERAL ATTITUDE OF "LET'S WAIT AND SEE HOW THE NEW TEAM PLAYS BEFORE WE FORM AN OPINION ABOUT THIS COMPLEX SITUATION."
MCAULIFFE

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